

Waukegan Harbor to get PCB cleanup

By Sean D. Hamill
Tribune staff reporter

January 15, 2003



Federal officials launched a two-week project Tuesday to take sediment samples from Waukegan Harbor to measure PCBs left behind after a \$22 million cleanup a decade ago removed most of the potentially hazardous chemical.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will analyze the results to determine how much more sediment must be dredged from the harbor as part of a long-awaited final cleanup that could begin as early as next summer.

Local officials praised the project as vital to Waukegan's plans to redevelop its lakefront, which for decades was home to heavy industry. The PCBs in Waukegan Harbor came from the Outboard Marine Corp. plant.

"The key to unlocking Waukegan's economic potential lies in the environmental cleanup of the lakefront, and that begins with the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor," U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) said as he and others gathered at the harbor Tuesday.

A decade ago, after being sued by the federal government, Outboard Marine spent \$22 million on a dredging project that removed hundreds of tons of contaminated sediment. It left behind lower levels of PCBs, in part due to settling, officials said.

During the next two weeks, workers will take 15 sediment samples from the harbor's floor to determine how much more sediment must be removed to give the harbor a clean bill of health. Officials estimated it could involve removing 300,000 cubic yards of sediment at a cost of up to \$15 million.

Kirk said he has arranged for \$15 million in federal funds for the cleanup.

"People say we haven't gotten far," said Susie Schreiber, chairwoman of the Waukegan Harbor Citizens Advisory Group, which has studied the harbor and pushed for its cleanup. "But look how far we've come since 1990."

PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are known to cause tumors, reproductive failure and liver disorders.

The U.S. EPA identified Waukegan Harbor as the worst PCB-contaminated site along the Great Lakes. Outboard Marine dumped hydraulic fluid containing PCBs into the harbor from the mid-1960s to the mid-'70s. The company is now in bankruptcy.

Not everyone believes the latest effort to remove PCBs is a good idea, however.

Paul Kakuris, chairman of the Illinois Dunesland Preservation Society, which monitors the lakefront near Waukegan, said new dredging will not stop additional PCBs from seeping into the harbor.

"They're putting the cart before the horse here," Kakuris said. "Dredging the harbor is only dealing with the symptoms. Until they clean up the Outboard Marine plant site all the way down to the aquifer, the [PCBs] are going to continue to leak up through the aquifer."

Bill Muno, director of the U.S. EPA's Superfund division, said the cleanups of the harbor and the Outboard Marine site are being pursued at the same time.

The PCB levels in the harbor prompted officials to erect signs warning people not to eat fish caught there. The signs were removed in 1997, but many people still shy away from eating fish caught there.

Waukegan Mayor Richard Hyde said he hopes the latest project will eliminate fears about eating fish caught in the harbor. He said he also hopes it will help the city redevelop its lakefront for residential and recreational use.

"If I'm going to buy a condominium down at the lakefront, I'd want to make sure everything is clean," Hyde said.

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**Waukegan City Council Takes First Step
Toward Comprehensive Lakefront Cleanup
Rejects proposal to dump at Yeoman Creek Superfund landfill site**

Waukegan, Ill., October 8, 2003 --- Waukegan City Council has authorized a planning process toward comprehensive lakefront cleanup, a central feature of the redevelopment master plan unanimously approved by the council Aug. 25.

The cleanup plan proposed by the council calls for creation of the Waukegan Lakefront Restoration Center, a centralized treatment facility on the former OMC North Plant property. Owned, operated and controlled by the city, the center would use proven technologies to clean both contaminated lakefront soils and sediments from Waukegan Harbor. Centralizing the cleanup would lower costs while reducing the timeframe for lakefront environmental remediation.

"The community will have a real voice in the design, siting and operation of the center," said Waukegan Mayor Richard H. Hyde. "The City of Waukegan looks forward to working with interested citizens as well as with state and federal agencies and other elected officials as it moves forward with this exciting project."

Once cleaned, soils would be returned to the lakefront. Those that could not be cleaned, along with the residue from the cleaning process, would be deposited in an engineered landfill on the north side of the former OMC North Plant building, currently a parking lot. The engineered landfill would create added parkland as well as a visual screen separating the residential development to the south from the North Shore Sanitary District.

The comprehensive plan takes a broader approach than a previous proposal to dispose only of harbor sediments at the Yeoman Creek Landfill Superfund site. By addressing both shoreline and harbor contamination, the comprehensive plan would prevent future contamination of the harbor and lake. As another advantage over the Yeoman Creek proposal, contaminated material would not be transported through the city's residential neighborhoods. The center would not accept commercial waste, and no incineration would take place there. As the center's owner, the city would determine who could use the facility.

Waukegan City Council Takes First Step Toward Lakefront Cleanup/add 1

“With this center, Waukegan will become known around the world for our innovation in cleaning up the environment and restoring natural habitats,” said City Planning Director Russ Tomlin. “The center will play an integral role in Waukegan’s overall revitalization, which will proceed at the same time as the environmental cleanup, a model proven successful in redevelopments at Kenosha, Glenview Naval Air Station and Fort Sheridan.”

The idea for a centralized environmental remediation facility was first presented to the city by the Urban Land Institute, a prestigious national land planning organization that conducted a study of Waukegan’s needs. That study paved the way for a revitalization master plan developed by leading architecture and planning firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. The master plan is designed to make Waukegan a regional retail, recreation, residential and business hub by capitalizing on the city’s assets, including its lakefront, location and labor force.

The SOM master plan is a blueprint for redeveloping 400 acres of the city’s downtown and 3.5 miles of lakefront. First steps include reviving downtown Waukegan as a destination for jobs, housing, entertainment, retail and dining. The most immediate improvements, some of which already are underway, will focus on landscaping, renovation or adaptive reuse of existing buildings, new parkland and better access to the lakefront. Downtown residential development is expected to start within the next 12 months. New residential neighborhoods are slated to begin development in the South Lakefront area during the next two years and in city’s Harborfront and North Harbor districts within a five-year timeframe. Over the next two decades, the plan is expected to add 4,000 new homes and

1 million square feet of retail, hospitality, entertainment, education and cultural facilities. Other key elements of the Waukegan plan include:

- Enhancements to the marina
- Creation of open space and recreational facilities
- Relocation of industrial facilities to sites closer to Interstate 94
- Narrowing of the Amstutz Expressway
- Realignment of the Metra rail line and building a more pedestrian-friendly station
- Parking for 2,000 to 4,000 cars

Initial funding for the program is provided through a \$2 million annual sales-tax set-aside. Developers will secure private financing for their projects. Total investment in Waukegan’s

- More -

Waukegan City Council Takes First Step Toward Lakefront Cleanup /add 2

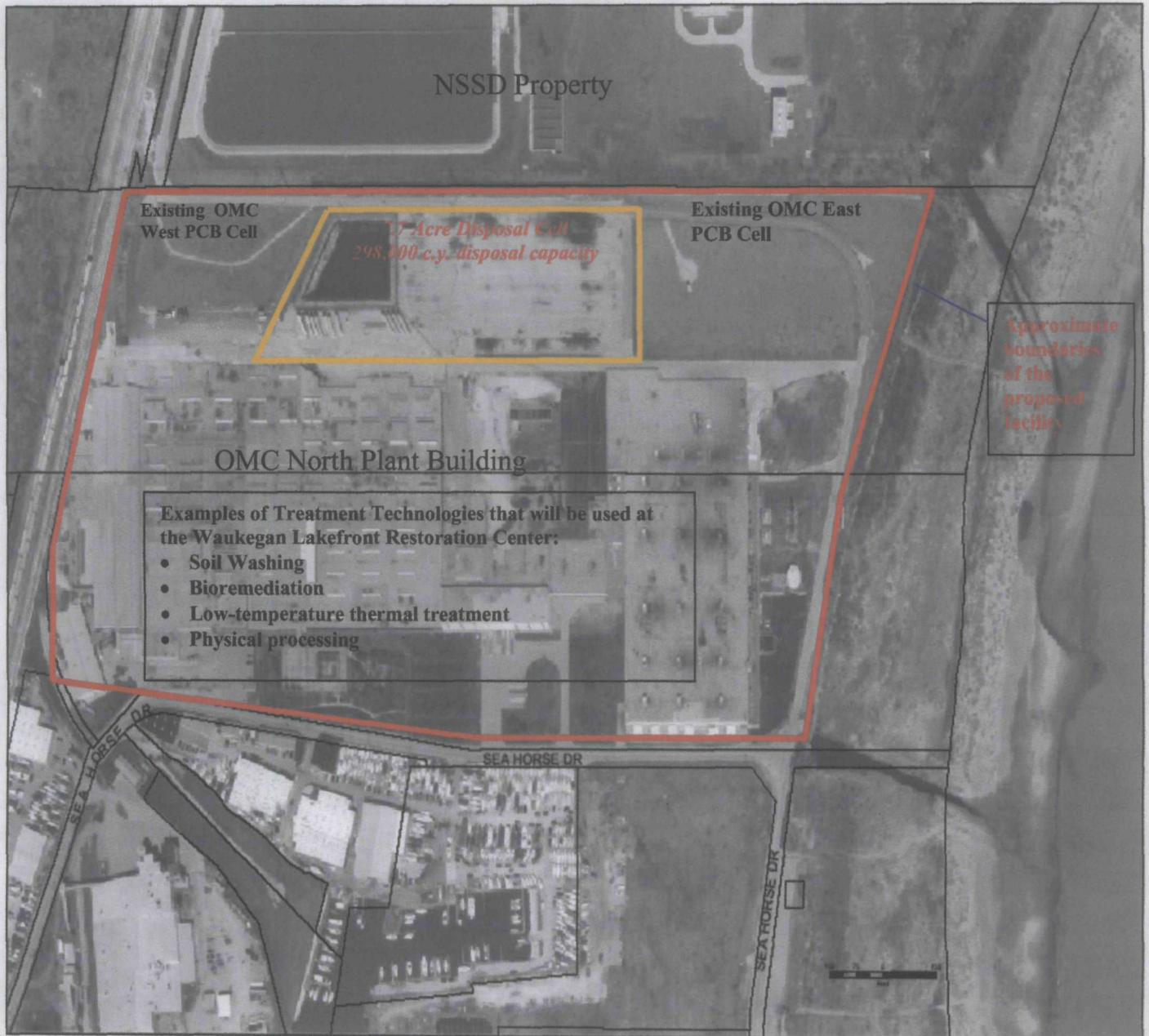
transformation is projected to exceed \$1 billion over 20 years, with 70 percent to 80 percent coming from private sources and the remainder from public funding. The redevelopment is expected to generate substantial revenues from retail, hospitality, entertainment and other businesses, while creating thousands of new jobs for the area.

About the City of Waukegan

Historically a commercial port city, later an industrial center, the City of Waukegan is now the seat of Lake County government and home to flourishing businesses, the College of Lake County, Shimer and Robert Morris colleges and cultural venues such as the Genesee Theater, now undergoing a major renovation. In addition the city features Lake Michigan recreational attractions including Waukegan Marina, the only deep-water harbor between Milwaukee and Lake Calumet. Located 40 miles north of Chicago and 60 miles south of Milwaukee, Waukegan has a socially diverse population of 88,000, with a strong base of Hispanic residents and businesses, and a labor force of more than 40,000. In August 2003, Waukegan City Council unanimously approved a 400-acre redevelopment plan designed to make Waukegan a regional retail, recreation, residential and business hub by capitalizing on the city's most important assets — its lakefront, location and labor force.

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Waukegan Lakefront Restoration Center



- The concept of a centralized treatment facility to promote lakefront redevelopment was first identified by the Urban Land Institute in February 2002.
- Simply stated: centralized treatment reduces the cost of cleaning up the lakefront.
- This concept was adopted in the Skidmore Owens & Merrill plan and approved by the City Council on August 25, 2003.
- The concept will become a reality with the construction of the "Waukegan Lakefront Restoration Center" on the former OMC North Plant property. The Center will be able to treat all the contaminated soils on the lakefront, including the sediments in the Waukegan harbor.
- The Center is a central feature of the Master Plan adopted by the City Council on August 25, 2003.
- The Center will use proven and tested technologies for cleaning contaminated soils. Soils which cannot be cleaned, along with residue from the soil cleaning process, will be disposed of in an engineered landfill. The landfill will be located on the north side of the North Plant building (where a parking lot is currently located).
- When completed the landfill will serve both as a park and a visual screen between residential development to the south and the North Shore Sanitary District to the north.
- Treatment technologies will be removed after the lakefront is cleaned up. The Center will reduce the time it takes to cleanup the lakefront from 20 to between 5 and 10 years.
- The Center will enable the City to cleanup the land around harbor so that more contamination does not migrate into the Harbor.
- The Center will be owned, operated and controlled by the City of Waukegan.
- The Center will only accept contaminated soil from the lakefront. The Center will NOT be a commercial waste facility. The City of Waukegan will decide who has permission to dispose at the Center.
- The community will have a real voice in the design and operation of the Center. The Center will attract visitors from around the world who will come to learn about innovative strategies for cleaning up the environment and restoring natural habitats.
- The City will be known for its innovation not for its contaminated harbor.
- The public will play an active role in local siting process.
- No incineration will take place at the Center.
- Unlike the proposal to dispose of harbor sediments at the Yeoman Creek Landfill, the Center offers a comprehensive solution to all the contamination on the lakefront.
- Unlike the Yeoman Creek Landfill proposal, contamination will not be transported across town through residential neighborhoods.
- The City of Waukegan looks forward to working with interested citizens, state and federal agencies and other elected officials as it moves forward with this exciting project.

SEPTEMBER 23, 2003

Waukegan Harbor cleanup is touted

Environmental, economic benefits cited in study

By Susan Kuczka
Tribune staff reporter

Residential property values could soar as much as \$250 million in Waukegan if the harbor's polluted sediment is cleaned up, according to a report released Monday.

The report by University of Illinois researchers and the Northeast-Midwest Institute suggests that removing the sediment also would spur home development along the Lake Michigan shoreline, further increasing the city's property values.

"This study provides evidence the cleanup would provide environmental and economic benefits to those who live, work and do business in Waukegan," said Nicole Mays, policy analyst at the institute, a non-profit organization based in Washington.

Financed with a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the study surveyed more than 900 Lake County residents, most of them in Waukegan. Conducted over the last two years, the study gauged their feelings about living near a harbor contaminated with PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyl.

Asked if they would spend more for their home if the harbor were cleaned up, the majority said they would be willing to spend several hundred dollars more a month in house payments, which helped shape the report's conclusions.

The typical home in Waukegan is worth about \$120,000, which could increase to \$170,000 if the harbor was cleaned, said John Braden, an

economist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign who worked on the study.

Craig Heneghan, chairman of the Task Force on Waukegan Neighborhoods, questioned the study's methodology. The group focuses on Waukegan housing issues.

"As we know, people don't purchase a home necessarily because of its [distance] from contaminated sites," he said. "I think one of the first things people look at is its schools, its crime rate. ... I would be more comfortable with it if it were a more encompassing study."

The study comes out as Waukegan officials work on a \$1.2 billion redevelopment plan for the city's lakefront and downtown business district.

Officials hope to transform the lakefront from a mostly industrial area into one with restaurants, shops, office complexes and new condo developments.

While more than \$20 million was spent in the 1990s to remove PCBs from Waukegan Harbor after decades of industrial use, the water remains polluted.

The PCBs, known to cause tumors, reproductive failure and liver disorders, were linked to operations at Outboard Marine Corp., which paid for the dredging project that removed hundreds of tons of the contaminated sediment.

A re-examination of the 1,600-acre harbor earlier this year showed PCBs continue to contaminate the sediment, which the EPA estimates would cost up to \$20 million to remove.

Thomas Skinner, the EPA's Midwest region coordinator, said he supported the cleanup along with dredging the harbor to make its channels deeper—a project the Army Corps of Engineers is studying.

"There may be some minor inconveniences along the way, but it would be a shame to pass up the opportunity to do something that other communities around the Great Lakes are dying for—the opportunity to restore something to its natural state," Skinner said.

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, whose 10th Congressional District includes Waukegan, said he did not believe finding money for the cleanup would be difficult. Kirk was among about 50 officials who discussed the study Monday at the College of Lake County campus in Waukegan.

Mayor Richard Hyde said that although city officials support cleaning up the harbor, dredging is not considered a priority.

State plans legal action to block pollution rules

By Christopher Wills
The Associated Press

*South
HW #23*

SPRINGFIELD — The head of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency said Monday the state will try to block new Bush administration pollution rules that she fears would harm air quality.

Director Renee Cipriano said the proposed rules, announced last month, will keep older, higher-polluting power plants and factories in use for longer.

The Illinois EPA, along with agencies from several other states, plans to file a formal objection when the proposed rules are officially published.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan represents the state in such challenges. Spokeswoman Melissa Merz said the rules are "an all-out assault on public health protections."

But the U.S. EPA defended the rules as an attempt to clarify policy under the Clean Air Act, making it simpler for businesses to comply.

"Generally speaking, they'll have no impact on emissions," said John Millett, a spokesman for the federal agency.

The rules involve older power plants and factories that are exempt from the most stringent pollution regulations.

Waukegan Harbor test to lead way in cleanup

Kirk heads effort designed to spur area's development

By GARY WISBY
ENVIRONMENT REPORTER

A \$200,000 sampling of polluted sediments in Waukegan Harbor will determine how costly a cleanup will be and how long it will take.

Motivation for the project is as economic as it is environmental.

"This is the No. 1 economic development opportunity for northern Illinois," said U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), who arranged a coordinated push for the cleanup by state and federal agencies.

Waukegan Mayor Richard Hyde, also speaking Tuesday at a news conference at Waukegan Port District offices, gave an example.

"By spring or early summer we'd like to have condos started on port district property," he said.

Fifteen core samples will be taken in the harbor in the next two weeks, with lab results expected in 90 days.

Tom Skinner, regional administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, said PCB levels in the sediments could be as high as 50 parts per million, the 1992 standard. The present stan-

dard is 1 part per million.

"The current level is no immediate threat to human health," he said.

Kirk pointed to lakefront development in two Wisconsin towns, Kenosha and Racine. "That's what needs to happen here, and harbor cleanup is the key."

A "What is clean?" debate is being staged in Congress, Kirk said, adding, "If you want no molecules [of pollution], you could spend hundreds of billions in Waukegan alone. [The project] is designed to get us 50 times cleaner than the old standard."

Lake Michigan water quality is light years ahead of where it was in the 1960s—except for mercury pollution. The congressman said he is writing legislation to attack the problem.

President Bush has called for a two-thirds reduction in mercury in water, "and we're going to help him get there," Kirk said.

Skinner said the talk in Washington is about rollbacks in environmental protection, but "we're here today as living proof that is not the case."

Susie Schreiber, director of a citizens advisory group, said the harbor plan has been entered in a Japan-based World Water Contest. Word is due by early February whether the project is one of 100 finalists.

She said estimates on how much sediment must be removed range from 43,000 cubic yards to 300,000 cubic yards.

The harbor once had the highest concentration of PCBs in the world. A 17-year partial cleanup, completed in 1993, eliminated the worst of it.



AL PODGORSKI/SUN-TIMES

U.S. EPA Regional Administrator Tom Skinner (center) shakes hands with Waukegan Mayor Richard Hyde, who envisions condos on port property.

Waukegan Harbor gets PCB check

By Sean D. Hamill
Tribune staff reporter

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will analyze the results to determine how much more sediment must be dredged from the harbor as part of a long-awaited final cleanup that could begin as early as next summer.

Local officials praised the project as vital to Waukegan's plans to redevelop its lakefront, which for decades was home to heavy industry. The PCBs in Waukegan Harbor came from the Outboard Marine Corp. plant.

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of the lakefront, and that begins with the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor," U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) said as he and others gathered at the harbor Tuesday.

A decade ago, after being sued by the federal government, Outboard Marine spent \$22 million on a dredging project that removed hundreds of tons of contaminated sediment. It left behind lower levels of PCBs, in part due to settling, officials said.

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liver disorders.

The U.S. EPA identified Waukegan Harbor as the worst PCB-contaminated site along the Great Lakes. Outboard Marine dumped hydraulic fluid containing PCBs into the harbor from the mid-1960s to the mid-'70s. The company is now in bankruptcy.

The PCB levels in the harbor prompted officials to erect signs warning people not to eat fish caught there. The signs were removed in 1997, but many people still shy away from eating fish caught there.

Waukegan Mayor Richard Hyde said he hopes the latest project will help the city redevelop its lakefront for residential and recreational use.

Waukegan Harbor cleanup first step to rejuvenation

By Kate Grusich Daily Herald Staff Writer

Posted on January 15, 2003

Decades ago, Waukegan's lakefront was an economic engine, with an active port and industry fueling the landscape.

Those days are long gone, as contaminated sites saddled by a polluted harbor have left city officials struggling with ways to revitalize and cleanup the area.

However, a solution may be in the pipeline that involves a unique partnership between federal, state and local agencies and a marriage of sorts between navigational and environmental dredging. That ambitious project was laid out Tuesday by lawmakers, city leaders and environmental experts.

"This particular project is really a model for my district," Lt. Col. Norm Grady of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said of the intergovernmental cooperation.

For the next two weeks, environmental experts will spend frosty mornings aboard testing barges at 15 spots in the harbor, breaking up ice and taking water samples. Those samples will be sent to a laboratory, with results expected in about 90 days.

Once that information is processed, officials will determine the extent of sediment contamination and costs and timelines associated with further cleanup. The entire cleanup project could cost about \$15 million, some experts said.

"It really depends on how clean it is," Grady said, adding the test results would have an impact on how dredged material is disposed. "It's all based on what you find during the sampling."

The Army Corps has long planned navigational dredging at the harbor, which involves removing sediment and debris to deepen shipping channels. Now, through the partnership with the EPA and other agencies, it is looking to expand into environmental dredging to remove toxic chemicals from certain areas.

The harbor's contamination dates back to the operations of the old Outboard Marine Corp. plant, where heavy metals and carcinogenic polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, are believed to have seeped into the harbor bottom. Waukegan Harbor has since been designated a Great Lakes "Area of Concern" by the International Joint Commission.

In past years, county and federal officials have been working toward removing the debris, pledging hundreds of thousands of dollars toward dredging. Agencies conducted an extensive dredging effort in the early 1990s, but guidelines have since changed. Because the EPA is now working off more stringent recommendations when it comes to acceptable levels of PCBs, officials felt dredging should resume in Waukegan.

Leaders are also touting the project as a way to help rejuvenate the city and entice visitors, businesses and residents.

Waukegan is pushing for an ambitious redevelopment project downtown and along its lakefront. It includes construction of condominiums near the Waukegan Yacht Club, renovation of the Genesee Theatre downtown, creation of a children's museum and the addition of restaurants and shops.

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, a Highland Park Republican, compared the Waukegan Harbor project to those done in Racine and Kenosha. The Wisconsin cities were able to transform their lakefronts into attractions, causing a positive ripple effect across the communities.

"That's what needs to happen here ... and the key to that is cleaning up the harbor," Kirk said. "The quality (of the lake) is substantially better than it was in the 1960s."

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Daily Herald

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Harbor cleanup good for city

By Mick Zawislak Daily Herald Staff Writer

Posted 9/23/03

Cleaning Waukegan Harbor of remaining pollutants would have a ripple effect on home values in the city and Lake County that would far outweigh the cost, a collection of top political and environmental leaders reiterated Monday.

Heavy hitters, including U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk and Tom Skinner, head of the federal Environmental Protection Agency's six-state Great Lakes region, assembled at the College of Lake County's campus in downtown Waukegan. It was a show of force to emphasize the importance of the project and urge city leaders to proceed.

Kirk and others said the harbor cleanup is a key to redevelopment of 1,600 acres of Waukegan lakefront that could translate to \$1.2 billion in improvements.

"I am totally behind this. I will mobilize the federal resources. Once we clean up this harbor, we will wake this town up like never before," said Kirk, the Highland Park Republican who has made the economic revival of Waukegan a priority.

Monday's gathering centered on a study by the Northeast-Midwest Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit think tank. The study showed a clean harbor would increase home values in Waukegan by a minimum of \$241 million, or about \$15,000 per home.

A best case scenario would boost that figure to \$832 million, study authors said, which would translate to about \$53,000 per home.

Although the results were released in early August, Monday's meeting was intended as an update information session. It was designated as one of 43 "areas of concern" on the Great Lakes in 1981.

Cleanup began in the early 1990s. Since then, more than 494 tons, or about 90 percent of the PCB-contaminated sediment has been removed at a cost of about \$21 million. It was paid for by Outboard Marine Corp.

Allowable standards changed, however, and the equivalent of another 10,000 dump trucks of contaminated sediment need to be removed.

Should the project proceed, it would be the first of the 43 sites - including 10 on Lake Michigan - to be removed from the list and become a national model, supporters said.

While federal and state officials are behind the effort, any cleanup carries a 35 percent local match. Kirk estimated the cost at \$9 million, but that final figure hasn't been determined and could be much higher.

Waukegan's costs have been estimated at about \$5 million, including work to lower a water main that crosses the harbor. The city council hasn't decided whether to participate.

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Waukegan Harbor cleanup remains a sticky problem

By Trine Tsouderos
Tribune staff writer

A suburban harbor once called one of the most PCB-polluted spots in the world is in line for a cleanup that could serve as an example for the Great Lakes region—if local and federal officials can agree on a plan.

But after 16 months of negotiations, Waukegan aldermen say they still have reservations. The main sticking points—how deep to dredge and who would be responsible for a Superfund landfill where the contaminated muck would be buried—have put the brakes on a project that federal officials say has national importance.

As officials prepare to meet Friday in Chicago to hammer out a cleanup plan for Waukegan Harbor, U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) said he needs a deal by April 1 to meet a congressional subcommittee deadline for fed-

eral spending requests.

"This is a fantastic, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Philip Bernstein, regional director of planning for the Army Corps of Engineers, which would dredge the harbor during the cleanup. "It would be a shame to let it go by the wayside."

A joint U.S.-Canadian commission has listed Waukegan Harbor as one of the 43 most polluted sites in the Great Lakes. It could become the first U.S. site taken off that list, officials at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said.

A cleanup of the harbor would serve as a model of interagency harmony and forge ties that could launch similar cleanups of other sites, U.S. officials say.

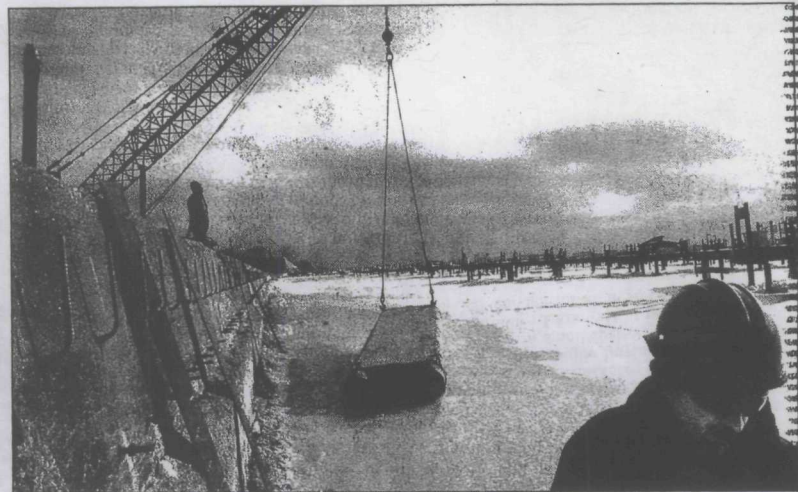
"We need to do this, and we need to do this quickly," said Kirk, who has promised to use his leverage on the House Appropriations Committee to secure \$20 million for the project.

In what officials describe as an unusual collaboration, the EPA and the Army Corps have agreed to work together at the site. But if officials cannot agree on where to bury the dredged material, the corps may not be willing to dredge the harbor. Without the cost savings of having the corps pull up contaminated material while dredging, the project would likely die, federal officials said.

"We wouldn't be able to do it without the Army Corps," said EPA Regional Administrator Tom Skinner. "The opportunity is now."

Last month, President Bush announced he would ask Congress for \$45 million to help clean as many as six polluted sites along the Great Lakes. The EPA has not announced where the money would be spent, but Waukegan is eligible.

Jeff Jeep, Waukegan's environmental attorney, said the



Tribune photo by Michael Terch
Ron Cermak (right) and Al Francis of Lakes & Rivers Contracting do repair work on a pier Thursday in Waukegan Harbor. They are moving a floating platform to stand on while drilling.

city, the EPA, the Army Corps and parties responsible for the landfill will meet Friday at Dykema Gossett law firm.

The city has no choice but to be cautious, he said. "We are making a recommendation that

will affect generations to come."

Waukegan officials agree the cleanup is necessary, particularly as the city seeks to transform its harbor from a jumble of brownfields and factories to a regional attraction with homes,

shops and restaurants.

But aldermen worry that the city would end up responsible for the Yeoman Creek landfill in Waukegan, where the PCB-laced material would likely be dumped, Jeep said.

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New cheaper hydrogen reactor could fuel home, car

BY GREGG AAMOT

MINNEAPOLIS — Researchers said Thursday that for the first time, they have produced hydrogen from ethanol in a prototype reactor small enough and efficient enough to heat small homes and power cars.

The development could help open the way for cleaner-burning technology at home and on the road.

Current methods of producing hydrogen from ethanol require large refineries and copious amounts of fossil fuels, the University of Minnesota researchers said.

The reactor is a 2-foot-high apparatus of tubes and wires that creates hydrogen from corn-based ethanol. A fuel cell, which acts like a battery, then generates power.

"This points to a way to make

renewable hydrogen that may be economical and available," said Lanny Schmidt, a chemical engineer who led the study. The work was outlined in today's issue of the journal Science.

Hydrogen power is not a new idea. Hydrogen fuel cells propel experimental vehicles and supply power for some buildings. But hydrogen is expensive to make and

uses fossil fuels. The researchers say their reactor will produce hydrogen exclusively from ethanol and do it cheaply enough so people can buy hydrogen fuel cells for personal use. They also think their technology could be used to convert ethanol to hydrogen at fuel stations for cars.

Hydrogen does not emit any pollution or greenhouse gases. But unlike oil or coal, hydrogen must be produced — there are no natural stores of it waiting to be pumped or dug out of the ground.

The new technology holds economic potential for Midwest farmers, who are leaders in the production of corn-based ethanol.

George Sverdrup, a technology manager at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, was encouraged by the research. "When hydrogen takes a foothold and penetrates the marketplace, it will probably come from a variety of sources and be produced by a variety of techniques," he said. "So this particular advance and technology that Minnesota is reporting on would be one component in a big system."

The Minnesota researchers envision people buying ethanol to power a small fuel cell that could produce 1 kilowatt of power, nearly enough for an average home.

AP

CARPETS
UNDEFEATABLE CHOICE OF ORIENTAL RUGS

Clean slate

EPA plan could prep Waukegan Harbor for development

By Casey Bukro
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

A plan proposed by representatives of the federal Environmental Protection Agency to clean up a parcel of land in Waukegan Harbor could clear the way for major economic development of one of Lake County's greatest natural assets.

The 36-acre parcel near Outboard Marine Corp. headquarters could be cleared of toxic waste, covered and stabilized with ground-covering vegetation and put to practical use within 10 years, EPA officials said.

For decades, movers and shakers in Lake County's largest city have suggested ways to better use the harbor. Expanding the Waukegan Port District's dock facilities, luring a private shipping firm or two or establishing a passenger ferry port in the harbor have all been discussed.

"But we need space to do any of those things, and most of the space in the harbor is already used up," said Mary Walker, Waukegan Harbor harbormaster.

"Getting 36 acres of new

industrial property would allow us to do any number of things we can't do now and that would help economic development in Waukegan and the whole county."

Walker lent her support to the EPA's preferred plan during a recent public hearing attended by about 50 people.

The \$26.5 million plan is a slightly modified version of the least-expensive but probably most flexible of three cleanup options ranging in cost from \$25 million to \$101 million.

Like Walker, the EPA's goal is to return the contaminated land to industrial use.

"The last thing we want to do is fence it off and let the last bit of land available on the harbor sit there," said Michael Bellot, EPA Superfund project manager.

The EPA is looking at several alternatives to clean up chemical contamination in the soil and groundwater on a 36-acre peninsula owned by Outboard Marine.

The most heavily contaminated part is 18 acres, containing major concentrations of arsenic, benzene, coal tar, phenol and ammonia—some of which can

cause cancer.

An unusual mix of contamination exists on the site because of its industrial history, dating to 1893.

The Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad Co. originally owned the site. Chicago Tie and Timber Co. treated wood with creosote there in the early 1900s. In 1928, a manufactured gas and coke plant was built there and operated until 1969.

The cleanup is expected to start in about three years.

Unclear at this point is who will pay for the multimillion-dollar cost. Bellot said that potentially responsible parties include Outboard Marine; EJ&E Railroad; General Motors; and several subsidiaries of Peoples Gas, Light and Coke Co.

Under Superfund law, such parties can agree to pay for the cleanup, or the EPA can conduct the cleanup and charge them for the cost.

"We will invite them to participate when all the remedies are chosen," said Bellot.

Freelance writer John Flink contributed to this report.

A TERRIBLE BEAUTY/continued

from the volcano, or maybe I will live with the volcano and take my chances."

Steve and Donna tried to explain the lessons of history: "Have you forgotten Mount Pelée? Have you ever seen the aftermath of such an eruption? We have, and we hope to God that you never will. Your life is more valuable than your land."

Steve told the farmer about an experience on Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines, which erupted in 1991. He saw a little girl trapped in a rising river of mud, crying in panic. Steve stretched out his arms to save her but couldn't quite reach far enough. Finally, he was forced to leave and never found out if she survived. The image of that child haunts him, he said.

"I understand your predicament," Steve told his new friend in Montserrat. "I don't have an answer. But I do know that this volcano will probably kill you and your children if you stay." After a sobering evening, the man and his friends promised not to return to their homes until the danger had passed.

Costa Rica's Mount Arenal (shown on cover) is relatively safe at a distance. In fact, the O'Mearas watched its eruption with other people on May 28, 1992. After a sleepless night during which the mountain let out a colossal BOOM every hour or so, Steve went for a walk just before dawn. He felt, he said, as if he were in a storybook. Frogs were chirping, a bat was flying around, stars were out.

"Then a big red fist came out of the volcano," he recalled, "and rose a mile into the night. Then the sound of an explosion—I felt a shock wave hit my chest."

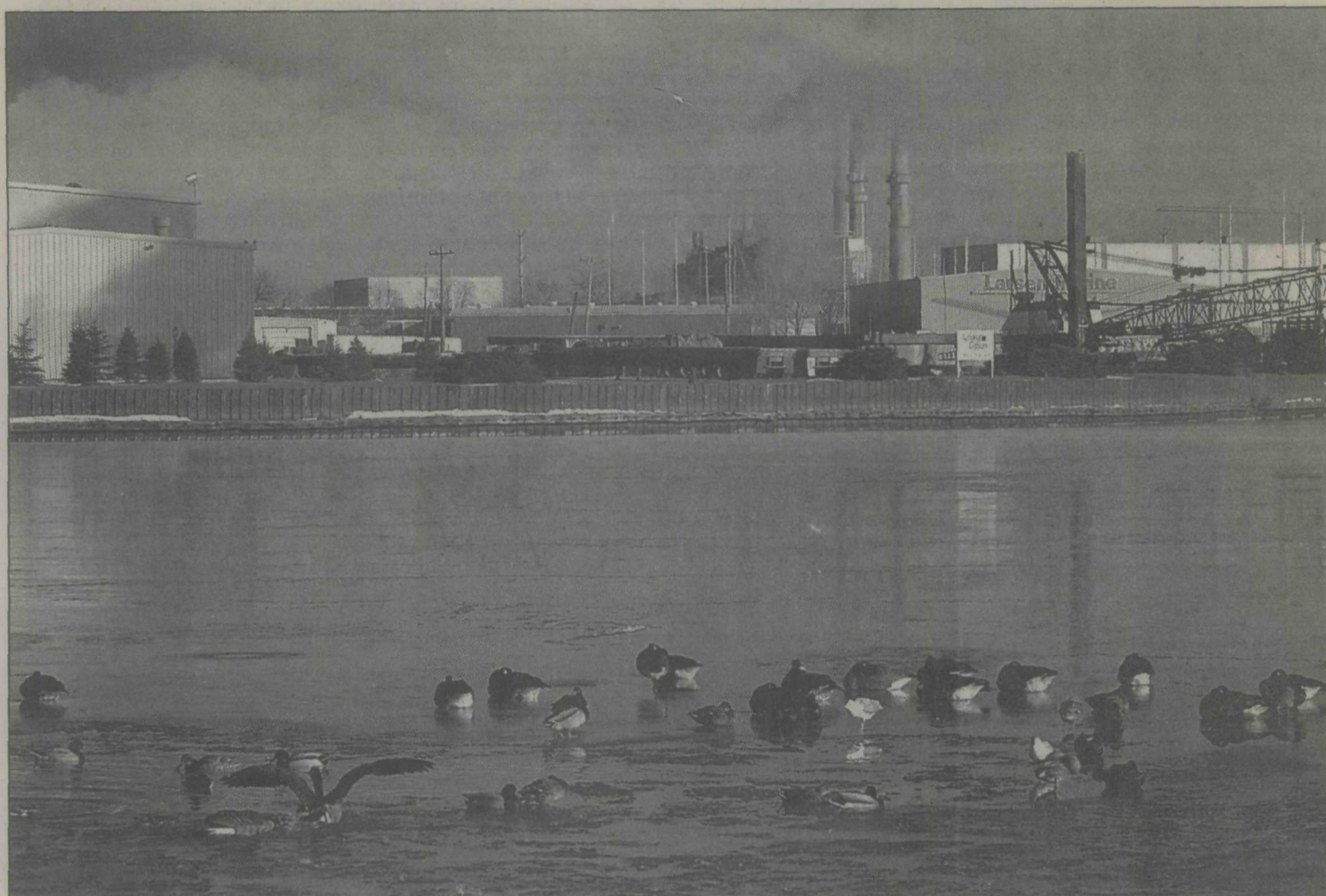
In the cabin, Donna was thrown awake by the blast. "A pane of glass just bowed in from the sound," she said. Boulders the size of Volkswagens came crashing down the mountain. No one was killed, but the O'Mearas learned a strong lesson about how unpredictable volcanoes can be.

When they're not off chasing the latest eruption, the O'Mearas live in the town of Volcano, Hawaii, a few miles from the great caldera of Kilauea. They live modestly, funding their work with writing and photography. Their most successful book, *Volcanoes: Passion and Fury* (Sky Publishing Corp.), offers a wealth of art, photography and feeling.

"We often hold our breaths," Donna said, "but we love being alive on this place where the Earth flows, hisses, coughs and steams." ■

1-30-04

NATION



Tribune photo by Michael Tercha

Illinois' only Great Lakes toxic spot is Waukegan Harbor, which the city wants to clean up so the lakefront is fit for shops and housing.

Great Lakes cleanup aid called drop in the bucket

Area leaders want Bush to seek more than \$45 million

By Michael Hawthorne
Tribune staff reporter

President Bush will ask Congress next week for \$45 million to clean up a handful of polluted sites along the Great Lakes, but the region's political leaders are grumbling that it falls far short of their ambitious goals to protect the world's largest source of fresh surface water.

During a speech in Michigan, a key election battleground that Bush lost in 2000, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Mike Leavitt said the agency would use the money to start or accelerate the cleanup of up to six of the 31 toxic hot spots that are remnants of the basin's industrial past.

The EPA hasn't decided where to spend the extra money, which would more than quadruple the amount being spent this year to rid the Great Lakes of contaminated sediment that threatens humans, fish and wildlife. Among the eligible sites are Waukegan Harbor and the Grand Calumet River in northwest Indiana.

"This major increase in funding demonstrates the president's commitment to preserving and protecting these Great Lakes," Leavitt said during a visit to Belle Isle, an island park in the Detroit River and another hot spot on the EPA's watch list.

Rate of cleanup criticized

Several government reports have criticized the EPA for moving too slowly to restore the areas, most of which have been known for decades. None of the

cleanups has been completed.

The administration's funding request comes a week after Mayor Richard Daley and a bipartisan group of regional political leaders met with Leavitt and urged him to back more aggressive efforts, similar to those under way in the Everglades and Chesapeake Bay. They want Congress to authorize \$4 billion over five years to tackle problems facing the Great Lakes, including toxic pollution, invasive species, habitat destruction and contamination that closes beaches.

Federal officials have committed to spending \$8 billion on the Everglades and \$7 billion to clean up Chesapeake Bay.

"It is a good first step, but we are calling on [President Bush] to do more and join us in a full-scale restoration," U.S. Reps. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.) and Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) said in a joint statement on Leavitt's speech.

The additional money for cleanups is "only one small piece of what needs to be done to protect this tremendous international resource," Daley said in a statement.

Bush's latest request will be included in the 2005 budget he sends to Congress next week. It also will include \$3 million for habitat restoration in the Great Lakes and \$1 million for research into destructive invaders, such as zebra mussels and Asian carp, Leavitt said.

Last year, Bush proposed spending \$15 million through the Great Lakes Legacy Act, a law he signed in 2002 that authorizes up to \$50 million a year through 2008 to clean up toxic sites. Congress ended up approving \$10 million, and the EPA is still reviewing grant applications.

Cleaning up Waukegan Harbor alone is expected to cost about \$20 million. A like amount

Great Lakes have dozens of contaminated areas

President Bush is asking for \$45 million to clean up contaminated sites in U.S. and binational areas of the Great Lakes. Local officials complain that the amount would help clean up no more than six of the region's 31 areas of concern, which includes two near Chicago.

GREAT LAKES HEAVILY POLLUTED AREAS

KEY: ■ United States □ Binational



Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Chicago Tribune

was spent during the early 1990s to remove some sediment contaminated with PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, potentially cancer-causing chemicals dumped in the harbor for years by Outboard Marine Corp.

Waukegan wants renewal

Removing the rest of the contamination is key to the city's effort to turn the once-industrial lakefront into a mix of restaurants, shops, office buildings and condos. Outboard Marine paid for the earlier cleanup, but the company is in bankruptcy.

In northwest Indiana, federal officials have been slowly cleaning up contaminated sediment from the Grand Calumet River and the Indiana Harbor and Ship Canal for the first time since 1972. Each year, an estimated 200 million pounds of oily toxic muck flows from the water-

ways into Lake Michigan, according to the EPA.

It will cost at least \$370 million to remove sediment contaminated by wastewater dumped from the early 1990s through the 1960s by steel mills, chemical plants, lead processors, oil refineries and other industries. The pollution includes PCBs and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, another group of probable carcinogens, formed during the incomplete burning of coal, oil, gas and garbage.

Environmental groups said Leavitt's speech in Michigan was designed to promote Bush's re-election in a key swing state.

"It's great news," said Cameron Davis, Lake Michigan Federation's executive director. "But I fear it precedes the bad news that President Bush won't be asking for a comprehensive restoration of the Great Lakes."